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LETTER DATED 25 APRIL 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I would highly appreciate this if the letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan A. HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: Russian]

Letter dated 25 April 1993 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you that the leaders of the Azerbaijani Republic and the entire Azerbaijani people are anxiously waiting for the adoption by the Security Council of the United Nations of a resolution condemning the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijan and demanding the withdrawal of Armenian armed formations from the recently occupied territories of my country. The urgent adoption of such a resolution would serve as a guarantee for the withdrawal of the Armenian armed formations from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and would prevent the repetition of similar aggressive actions in the future, which, in its turn, would provide the conditions for the continuation of the negotiating process under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) within the framework of its Minsk Group.

As you know, the latest meeting of the "five-plus-one" group in Geneva was broken off following the occupation by Armenian armed formations of the Kelbajar district of the Azerbaijani Republic. At that same meeting, the view was stated that negotiations could be resumed only after the liberation of those occupied territories. It is common knowledge, however, that this was followed by massive attacks mounted by the Armenian forces against the Fizuli district of Azerbaijan, with the clear aim of seizing the district, as well as against many other north-western and south-western districts of Azerbaijan.

The position of the Azerbaijani Republic is as follows.

There can be no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. At present, the resumption of the negotiating process under the auspices of CSCE depends on the resolution of the question of the liberation of the territories of Azerbaijan recently seized by Armenian armed formations, in other words, on the restoration of the status quo as at 25 March 1993 (the date on which the Geneva consultations of the "five-plus-one" group ended). Only after the liberation of the above-mentioned territories are we prepared to sit down at the negotiating table within the framework of the CSCE Minsk Group and of the "five-plus-one" group.

We consider that the adoption of a resolution by the Security Council of the United Nations on this issue would be a reliable guarantee of the liberation of these territories of Azerbaijan.

Once again, we urgently appeal to you and to the members of the Security Council on behalf of the leaders of the Azerbaijani Republic to convene a meeting of the Security Council as soon as possible to adopt a resolution on this issue.

As far as the negotiating process commenced on the proposal of the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. Yeltsin, and the cease-fire agreements and other agreements supposedly reached during these negotiations are concerned, the effectiveness of unilateral mediation by the Russian Federation outside the context of CSCE is doubtful, since, in December 1991 the Russian Federation and Armenia concluded an agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual security, which contains three paragraphs on military assistance. At the same time, as members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Russian Federation and Armenia are part of the collective security system of the countries of the Commonwealth.

We wish to point out once again that the Azerbaijani side is not prepared to exchange the peaceful negotiating process under the auspices of CSCE for the mediatory efforts of individual States. Unilateral mediatory efforts by individual States are useful, but only at the level of unofficial meetings to bring closer the positions of the sides so that those matters can subsequently serve as the basis for negotiations within the framework of the CSCE Minsk Group.

The meetings which have taken place recently through the mediation of the Russian Federation, should be viewed from this perspective, as attempts to bring closer together the positions of the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides, attempts which, unfortunately, have so far not proved successful.

At all the meetings, and in Sochi, Moscow and Ankara, the two sides stated their positions with regard to the resolution of the problem, but those positions did not become any closer. In all cases, the Azerbaijani side made the liberation of the recently occupied Azerbaijani territories and the return to the status quo as of 25 March 1993 a condition for continuing the talks within the framework of the Minsk Group of CSCE. The Armenian side did not accept these conditions.

Only during the Moscow meeting was an attempt made to discuss a draft agreement, but that, too, proved unsuccessful since the draft document contained a number of conditions, included at the insistence of the Armenian side, which were completely unacceptable to Azerbaijan.

Reports stating that an agreement had been reached between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia during their meeting in Ankara are unfounded. Indeed, during the course of the meeting, both Presidents expressed a desire to put a stop to the bloodshed and the view that it was essential to continue the search for a solution to the problem within the framework of the peaceful process being conducted under the auspices of CSCE. In that connection, the President of Azerbaijan made the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed formations from the recently occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in accordance with the statement by the President of the Security Council of the United Nations of 6 April 1993, a condition which would permit the continuation of the negotiating process. The President of Armenia, on the other hand, once again stated that the Republic of Armenia was not participating in the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories. This uncooperative position left no possibility for any substantive talks whatsoever.

Attempts to present the statement of views as the beginning of a process of drawing the positions of the sides closer together has only one goal - to prevent the Security Council from adopting an appropriate resolution on the matter and to gain time and thereby legalize the latest seizure of the Kelbajar district of Azerbaijan, as has virtually occurred in the case of the previously occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

As for reports that agreement had been reached on a cease-fire, this agreement was reached only for a fixed short period of time and applied only to a limited area of operations - along the route followed by the CSCE group. At the present time, the cease-fire agreement is being violated by the Armenian side and many districts of Azerbaijan are currently being subjected to massive artillery and missile bombardment.

Thus, contacts between the two sides, both in Geneva and in Moscow, Sochi and Ankara, have demonstrated quite clearly that the Armenian side is disregarding the demand that it withdraw its forces from the territory of the Kelbajar district of Azerbaijan contained in the statement by the President of the Security Council of the United Nations of 6 April 1993. This has led us to conclude that the only way to influence the Armenian side may be the adoption of an appropriate resolution by the Security Council. In this connection, the Azerbaijani Republic, true to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, appeals to the Security Council to take the necessary measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Sir,

I have the honour, on behalf of the leaders of the Azerbaijani Republic, to appeal to you and to the members of the Security Council, in the light of the foregoing, to convene an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the question of the adoption by the Council of a resolution condemning the aggression against Azerbaijan and thus open the only way for the continuation of the peaceful negotiating process within the framework of CSCE.

I take this opportunity to convey to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Tofik GASIMOV
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Azerbaijani Republic